



The State of New Hampshire
Department of Environmental Services



March 6, 2007

The Honorable Judith Spang, Chairman
Resources, Recreation and Development Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 305
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: HB 722 relative to rivers management and protection program

Dear Chairman Spang:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 722, which incorporates tributary drainage areas into the notification and planning mechanisms for designated rivers, expands the membership of the Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC), and makes other technical changes. The Department of Environmental Services (DES) supports this bill.

HB 722 incorporates tributary drainage area management as an option for locally developed and adopted River Corridor Management Plans authorized under 483:10 and requires tributary drainage areas to be included in Long-Range River Management Plans for state-owned lands under RSA 483:10-a. Being able to consider management issues at a watershed scale is a well-established water resource management principle supported and encouraged by DES and the natural resource community as whole. Allowing Local River Management Advisory Committees (LRMACs) and their corridor communities to consider management options for river tributaries and requiring state agencies to consider how to manage all properties that contribute water to the designated river corridor both serve to further protect and manage our state's designated rivers.

HB 722 also expands the memberships of the RMAC to include a representative from the LRMACs and from the NH Department of Transportation (DOT). This change was suggested by the RMAC, and DES concurs. We believe the additional members will enhance the state-local partnership that RSA 483 provides for the state's designated rivers.

In summary, we believe that the changes proposed by HB 722 provide sound improvements to the Rivers Management and Protection Program.

Thank you again for this opportunity to comment on this bill. Please feel free to call me at 271-3503, or Steve Couture at 271-8801, if you have any questions or need additional information.

Very truly yours,


for Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Representatives Timothy D. O'Connell, James F. Powers and Ron J. Mack
Senator Margaret Hassan